Organizational & Departmental Context (Culture):

Synthesis of Recommendations

1. Focused time and space for collaboration (purposeful, inclusive, consistent, with protocols)—working together toward goals

Nothing is unclear about this. Seems feasible in our institutional context. However, we still need to work on convincing people that protocols are beneficial and even necessary for making sure everyone has a voice. We need to do some more learning as a department that this is important. Peer learning

1. Faculty-driven informed data-gathering and evidence-based decisions

Currently without an institutional researcher. Unknown whether

Data that the institution has is important, but we also as a department are amassing more home-grown data based on assessments that are developed and designed and administered by faculty in the department.

1. Ongoing professional learning opportunities that honor professional judgment of faculty

We interpret professional learning opportunities to mean training by experts or consultants in areas that extend our professional abilities beyond mathematical content. In particular, we could benefit from training in different pedagogies, ways to design experiments about student learning, and facilitating collegial relationships in the department. We don’t feel that we have an issue with our professional judgment being honored.

1. Trusting environment with increased transparency and clarity in communications regarding learning processes and results (“it’s about the students”)

As a department, we would all agree that “it’s about the students,” but we lack the trusting environment that allows us to make decisions.

1. Culture of improvement and innovation—open to making mistakes and learning from them

There is still a lot of fear in our department around making mistakes. Some posturing takes place, such as “what I’m doing is fine.” People are open to structural changes but less willing to experiment with deliberate changes in classroom practices. This ties into the trusting environment that we need to foster.

1. Giving administrators a real “window to the work” (concrete evidence) – building relationships, open and explicit communications [think broadly about key administrative stakeholders]

We have great support from our administrators, and they have been important stakeholders from the beginning. If anything, administrators are perhaps more eager for change than the department (e.g. the Dean was willing to replace courses early rather than piloting first). Administration also supports improvements by being willing to run low enrollment sections of new classes. Administrators (Dean and VP of Instruction) are fully aware of the changes in the department based on regular meetings with members of the RPM team.